Bharti Board is accountable to Parliament and Prasar Bharti Board presents itself before the Standing Committee, before the Consultative Committee and before other Committees. Therefore, Prasar Bharti is absolutely accountable to Parliament, more particularly to Government.

Levying of licence fee

*65. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are considering levying of a licence fee for ownership of TVs, for funding Prasar Bharati's activities; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) No specific proposals are under consideration. However, various ideas have been mooted for strengthening Prasar Bharati's autonomous financial base.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, I have ten out of twenty questions. Out of the first five, four belong to me. I should be given a medal in addition to the Best Parliamentarian award.

My answer is: no specific proposals are under consideration. However, various ideas have been mooted for strengthening Prasar Bharti's autonomous financial base.

SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Minister has said that various ideas have been mooted for strengthening Prasar Bharti's autonomous financial base. I want to know from the hon. Minister if there is any concrete proposal, concrete idea by which the revenue model of Prasar Bharti can be worked out.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, Prasar Bahrti is a public broadcasting corporation. Internationally, public broadcasters are supported by the Government and by the people directly. As Minister, Sir, I suggested that we could go in for a route of independent financing for Prasar Bharti with a view to removing uncertainty in Prasar Bharti, with a view to enriching and augmenting the content of autonomy. Therefore, I made a few proposals. They are all for public debate. I want the Members of Parliament to support me. One of the proposals I made was that we could go in for revival of licensing fee or we could go in for one time duty.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let the proposals come up for discussion.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: No, since I referred to it....

SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: My next supplementary is, what is the actual expenditure of Prasar Bharti and what are you earning today?

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, before I give some broad answer to the question we must get our first principles clear. Prasar Bharti is not a commercial network. Therefore, you cannot judge its performance in terms of revenue and expenditure. Approximately, two-thirds of the expenditure incurred by Prasar Bharti is met from the Budget.

SHRI BALBIR K. PUNJ: Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is common knowledge that the Finances of Prasar Bharti are in a mess. There has been a cut in the expenditure, people have been denied facilities of are being picked up from home and dropped, Staff's overtime has been cut. Now there is a big competition in the TV industry. In case they continue to cut down the cost like this, then Sir, firstly, how do you expect Prasar Bharti to compete with the private channels?Secondly Sir, Prasar Bharti had advanced huge sums of money in the last two decades to various private people for programming and that money has not come. What is the amount of money which is pending and is Prasar Bharti taking any steps to recover that money from those very people? Thank you.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: I share the concern of the hon. Member. I am really touched by his concern. I agree that Prasar Bharti Board, Prasar Bharti Organisation, is facing financial troubles. It is facing the axe indiscriminately at the hands of my colleague from the Finance Ministry. Therefore, I would like all of you to support me in this endeavour to strengthen the economy. As for the arrears I would like to say that we have collected most of the arrears but there are arrears in regard to interest. And, we are doing our best to collect the arrears too. As of now, the employees there are suffering from some problems. I am talking to the employees. But, I also would like to talk to the hon. Members.

Incentive to rose producers

*66. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Pushkar in Rajasthan produces the best export quality roses in the country;